THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India in his Report No. 8 of 2002 (Air Force and Navy), has pointed out certain shortcomings in the acquisition of nine special purpose helicopters with associated equipments and spares for Indian Navy at a total cost of 200.80 million US Dollars.

As per prescribed procedure an 'Action Taken Note* (ATN) conveying the Government's response to the audit observations is being prepared to be sent to the C&AG.

National Disaster Management Agency

5134. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have set up a National Disaster Management Agency to deal with biological threats like anthrax, cholera, plague etc.;

(b) whether the Agency is prepared to face such an attack and has adequate infrastructure to deal with the situation;

(c) whether Government proposes to set up a separate department to protest the country from such unconventional attacks; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): <a) to (d) In the context of the development security situation, the need to have a strong and robust mechanism for management of all types of disasters, including biological, radiological and chemicals disasters, backed up by a professional pool of manpower, has been felt by the Government. As proposals regarding the requisite structures and capabilities are presently in the formative stages only, it is too early to furnish any further details.